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THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

NIC 9076-82.

9 November 1982

National Intelligence Council

MEMORANDUM FOR: Acting Director of Central Intelligence

FROM:

[REDACTED] NIO/NESA

SUBJECT: Iranian Policy

1. The long promised policy review of Iran, which is the backdrop for any renewed political action mandate, is to be accomplished through the vehicle of the overall NESA policy statement NSSD-4. Production of this document, long stalled by recent area crises, is scheduled to again commence on 12 November. Precedent indicates it will be a long process.

2. In the meanwhile, there are a number of indications that Soviet-Iranian official relations are deteriorating over time. Although no specific actions are currently identifiable which would hasten this trend, you may wish to mention it in your discussions with key officials. Specifically:

- Overt analysis reflects this trend. From the Shah's fall in January 1979 until early 1982 Soviet analysts of the Iranian scene emphasized the "positive" developments in Tehran and clearly sympathized with the Islamic revolution. Since mid-1982, however, the Soviet line has become much less sympathetic. A July 1982 Kommunist article, for example, contained unprecedented criticisms of the Khomeini regime and made little effort to balance negative comments with positive elements. In September, the Soviets turned down visa applications for an Iranian wrestling team. ✓
- On the Afghan border, there have been a number of small incidents involving Afghan/Soviet "hot pursuit" incursions into Iranian territory. These have been reported by the Iranian border site back to Tehran. In one case, a Soviet soldier was captured and later repatriated.
- There is at least one unconfirmed indication that the Iranians may be commencing larger training activities of Afghan Mujahidin. ✓

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3. The downturn apparently reflects Moscow's realization that the clerical regime in Tehran is consolidating its grip on power, cracking down on the Tudeh Party and is determined to export the revolution to Afghanistan as well as Iraq and the Gulf states. ✓

- Iran's invasion of Iraq last summer may have surprised Soviet analysts by underscoring Khomeini's willingness to use force to help Islamic revolutionaries outside Iran.

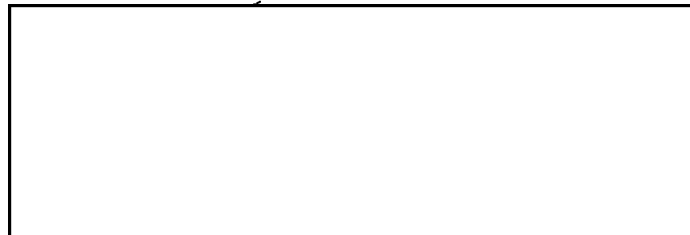
The deterioration probably also reflects Khomeini's firm rebuffs of several Soviet overtures last spring.

A cooling of Soviet-Iranian ties does not presage any opening for the US with Khomeini but it does reduce the danger somewhat of Soviet-Iranian collusion against US interests in the Persian Gulf. ✓

- In a speech on the third anniversary of the hostage takeover last week Khomeini blasted the US for causing most world conflicts, especially the Iran-Iraq war.
- Economic ties have not been damaged, a sign that neither side wants the deterioration to go too far.]

4. If the downward trend in Soviet-Iranian relations proves valid over time, it has obvious implications for our political action planning in Iran. It would, specifically, tend to support the State Department thesis that our best course is to allow time to take its course, and not engage in the types of activities which would slow this evolutionary process.

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